لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله

إن الدين عند الله الإسلام

THE REVIEW OF RELIGIONS

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Aman 1358—March, 1979

EDITOR

M. G. AHMAD

THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT IN ISLAM

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The Promised Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, was born in 1835 in Qadian. a village in India. In the eighties of the 19th century, he was called to the office of World Reformer to combat the false Religious Philosophies and to explode the Christian theory of redemption based on the fiction of Christ's death on the Cross and to tell the Christians and Muslims to call off their hope for a second visit from Christ as he had been gathered to his fore-fathers and barred like all mortals from coming back to the world, and that he had come instead as the Promised Messiah.

The Promised Messiah initiated the Ahmadiyya Movement to revive faith in God, challenging rival churches to a spiritual contest to seek Divine sanction for the religion He favoured, through prayer and appeal to Him for guidance and arbitration in the matter, by means of His signs, to re-establish the glory of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, to expound and disseminate spiritual beauties and moral excellences of the teachings of the Holy Quran, to wean men from war-like tendencies and to educate world opinion in favour of renunciation of war as a means of settling disputes, to infuse hope, faith and courage in the drooping hearts of Muslims and all the depressed races and nations of the world, to warn the exploiters, slave-drivers and pedlars in sin against the evil consequences for their evil ways, to collect under one banner all the true followers of Islam and lovers of peace and to inculcate among them the spirit of tolerance, good will and selfless fellow-service and a feeling of true brother-hood.

The Promised Messiah passed away in 1908 and was succeeded by his foremost votary and closest companion, Hazrat Hafiz Haji Hakim Maulvi Noor-ud-Din as Khalifa-tul Masih I. After his death in 1914, the Promised Son of the Promised Messiah, Hazrat Haji Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, was chosen as Khalifa-tul Masih II. During his 52-year long leadership, the Khalifa-tul Masih II organized a world-girdling chain of mosques and missions. On his death on November 8, 1965, the electoral college named with one accord, Sahibzada Hafiz Mirza Nasir Ahmad, Promised Messiah's grandson, Khalifa-tul Masih III.

For further information about the Movement, its activities, aims, objectives and literature, enquiries may be addressed to the nearest Ahmadiyya Mission or direct to :

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THE REVIEW OF RELIGIONS

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF ISLAM

This is an organ of the Ahmadiyya Movement which represents true Islam. It deals with religious, ethical, social and economic questions, Islamic mysticism and current topics. It also provides Book Reviews.

It is open to all for discussing problems vital to the religious and spiritual welfare of man, but it does not give any assurance to publish all articles received by the Editor, nor does it accept responsibility for views expressed by contributors.

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The Review of Religions

RABWAH, PAKISTAN

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THE POST CRUCIFIXION LIFE OF JESUS

By Shaikh Abdul Qadir

Towards the end of the nineteenth century the Promised Messiah, the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, wrote a book which he called "*Masih Hindustan Mein*" (Lit. Jesus in India). In this book he gave an account of a grand discovery—a discovery of interest to all peoples of the world.

From the late 19th century onwards, more and more discoveries began to point to the fact that Jesus Christ did not die on the Cross. He was saved from an accursed death. True, two Gospels of the New Testament, Mark and Luke, speak of the Ascension of Jesus to Heaven. But the texts on this point are now generally dismissed as fabrications and fictitious. They are later interpolations ; not part of the original text. Christianity today is the *most* important among the religions of the world, both in respect of its numbers and in respect of its influence over world affairs. Yet it is true that of the life of Jesus Christ, we know only a fragment, confined

to a brief period of 2—3 years. The rest of Jesus's life remains veiled.

According to the chronology now generally accepted, Jesus was born in 9 B.C. The event of the Cross took place in April 33 A.D.[1] From the death on the cross God saved Jesus. What happend after this? Where did Jesus go? How did he pass the rest of his days? What happened to the Holy Mother? How many of the Apostles remained with him? All these are interesting questions. A number of recent studies by European and other scholars leave no doubt that Jesus was taken down alive from the cross, while he was in a state of deep swoon. To cite a few instances one may refer to Robert Graves and Joshua Podro's *The Nazarene Gospel Restored* (1954) and *Jesus in Rome* (1957) which treat of this theme and I quote from an Introductory note in Jesus in Rome.

> "Jesus though officially crucified in A. D. 30, escaped alive, probably to Parthia, and in A.D. 35 was seen on the road to Damascus by St. Paul—who had been sent there to bring him back for a second Crucifixion. St. Ignatius wrote to the Smyrnaeans, not earlier than A. D. 70, that he "Both knew and believed" Jesus to be still alive and in the flesh. A passage of Suetonius's Twelve Caesars, referring apparently to A.D. 49, reports Jesus as having raised disturbances in Rome "at the instigation of Chrestus", a synonym for "Christus". The authors compare this passage with an early Talmudic account of the Messiah's having been seen among the beggars at the gate of Rome. They suggest that if this was Jesus, his visit to Rome had been undertaken in fulfilment of a prophecy that the Messiah must raise the standard of national liberation in the enemy citadel. What eventually became of Jesus, they leave an open question; though critically discussing Muslim and pre-muslim accounts of his appearance in India about A. D. 50, and at his

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(1) J. Bronowski, The Ascent of Man (BBC) 1974 Index "Jesus Christ".

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burial by St. Thomas at Srinagar not later than the year 72." (Jesus in Rome).

The authors were unaware of what the Founder of Ahmadiyya Movement had written years before in his book 'Jesus in India' written in April 1899. This book saw the light of day in 1903 when it was serialised in the journal *Review of Religions* (both Urdu and English editions). The English version was captioned "An Important Discovery regarding Jesus Christ". The book 'Jesns in India'was not published until six months after the death of the Promised Messiah. Today European scholars are obliged to take serious note of the discoveries recorded in this book.

It must be remembered that the first ever reference to Ascension is in the closing verses of Mark.

The Encyclopaedia Britannica (1969) in an article on 'Mark' terms it as "spurious ending".

Because of the new light which the ancient manuscripts throw on the subject and researches of Biblical scholars, these verses pertaining to ascension have been expunged from the concluding portion of the texts of Luke and Mark in the 'Revised Standard Version' of the Bible. However, there are footnotes indicating that "some manuscripts inserted these verses".

(ii) Apart from the four Gospels, we may also refer to the following earliest documents in Edessan Christianity, namely:

(a) The Gospel of Thomas. This contains 114 sayings of Jesus Christ. A Coptic translation of these has been found in the Egyptian village Nag Hammadi, in an ancient graveyard.

(b) The "Odes of Solomon", This "Solomon" is not King Solomon but the author of 42 songs composed in Syriac. These are hymns celebrated among the early Christians of Edessa and sung by them at their congregations. In some of these Jesus Christ himself addresses the World, Skarin states:

"If you have wondered, as I used to, what the

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writings of Jesus would have been like had he left a written message, you should rejoice as I have rejoiced in the "Odes of Solomon"
(Annalff Skarin, "Ye are Gods" Philosophical Library, New York, p. 217)

(c) A Syriac "Song of the Pearl" consisting of 105 verses. This song, full of metaphors consists of three figures, the Father, the King of Kings, the Mother, the Queen of the East, and the Brother "the next in rank" on the heights of "WARKAN". (means, elevated place.)

In 1969 was published the exciting book called the "Crucible of Christianity" (edited by Prof: Arnold Toynbee). In this book it is stated that these three early documents belong to the first century A.D.

We will have occasion later on to point out that according to these documents Jesus Christ was delivered from the Cross and having found this deliverance he gathered his followers and settled in a land resembling PARADISE.

It is surprising that in the 2nd century in the West the Hebrew Gospel was not known.

And yet in India, in the North West to be precise, the Hebrew Gospel was known. We have a philosopher and Christian scholar of Alexandria 'Pantaenus' who lived in the middle of 2nd century A.D. who says that in the course of his travels in India he came across the Hebrew Gospel. In fact according to Jerome (A. D. 346-420) he brought back one copy of the Hebrew Gospel from India to Alexandria. Nothing, however, is known of this manuscript. May be it was destroyed by the Church. The following quotation from the 'Crucible of Christianity' is full of significance:

"The earliest documents we have on Edessan Christiantiy-namely the Gospel of Thomas, the song of the Pearl contained in the Acts of Thomas, and the Odes of Solomon—go back, in part, to the end of the 1st Century and display the characteristic features of Judaeo Christianity—Beyond Edessa, Christianity penetrated into

Adiabne, where there was an important Jewish Community, and no doubt reached India very soon, since Pantaenus writing in the mid-2nd Century, asserts that he found in India a gospel in the Hebrew Script." (The Crucible of Christianity, edited by Arnold Toynbee, London 1969, p. 277b).

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(iii) The whole lot of Apocryphal and gnostic literature provides descriptions of events after crucifixion. It also contains description of the missionary plans of the disciples of Jesus, couched in pious language used in narratives of miracles. For example in Acts of St. Thomas we read that after the Crucificion the Messiah drew lots for selecting disciples for the various missionary campaigns. As a result of this St. Thomas was nominated missionary for India. So Thomas was sent to India. He visited Taxila where he achieved great success, so much so that King Gondophorus reportedly became a Christian. The arrival of Jesus himself in India is described in these words ss a miraculous appearance.

"And when night fell and he (St. Thomas) slept, the Lord came and stood at his head, saying, Thomas, rise early, and having blessed them all: for by thy going shall many take refuge with me." (The Apocryphal New Testament by M.R. James, p. 377)

As pointed out before the Acts of St. Thomas also contain an early Ode (consisting of 105 verses) in which we read of heights in far off East, called the heights of Warkan. Here flourished the Kingdom of God. Here ruled the King of Kings. Here was the Queen Mother of the East and next to her in rank was a Brother. Warkan is a Syriac word meaning 'elevated place'. The three persons mentioned are probably God, Mary and the son of Mary. Gnostic and Apocryphal literature is almost like a heap of pitchblend, all brown to black sand containing particles of radium waiting for a Madame Curie to sift.

(iv) In ancient Cairo there was a synagogue. This was really a church which the Jews transformed into Geniza in 882

A.D. In 1890 when books buried underground at this spot were dug up, about two hundred thousand pages of ancient writings in Hebrew came to light. A book of unusual significance was also identified. This is called the Zadokite document (The Damascus Rule). It contains an account of a teacher of Righteousness to guide them in the way of His Heart. "This Teacher is said to have fled from Jerusalem to Damascus. Some scholars think that this Teacher is Jesus Christ. "A Zadokite document" throws further light on the presence of Jesus in Damascus". Fragments of this book were also found in the valley of Qumran. All this evidence came to light in the first century A.D. Their importance and their historical significance is obvious.

(v) "The Odes of Solomon" consists of 42 Syriac Odes of Christians of the first century. In 1908 James Rendel Harris, famous Syriac scholar, was able to locate this forgotten treasure. What he found was a sixteenth century manuscript.[1]

Some Odes included in this manuscript are put in the mouth o Jesus Christ who addresses the World in these words:

"They who saw me marvelled at me, because I was persecuted, and they supposed that I was swallowed up: for I seemed to them as one of the lost;"

"And I did not perish, for I was not their brother nor my birth like theirs."

"And they sought for my death and did not find it."
(ODE 28 verses 8, 14, 15)

"And I rose up and am with them; I will speak by their mouth."

"And I did not perish, though they devised it against me."

"I made a congregation of living men amongst his dead men; and I spoke with them by living lips."
(ODE 42 v.6. 14, 8)

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1. The Lost Books of the Bible (The World Publishing Company, New York, 1944. Second Part "Forgotten Books of Eden". "The Odes of Solomon" (p. 120-140)

One of the Odes speaks of a land resembling paradise, an eminence. Here apparently Jesus and his followers found shelter and became settled. Biblical scholars think that the Gospel of St. John and these odes are drawn from the same source.[1] From this, one can easily see the historical significance of these Odes.

(vi) The years 1945-47 are very important. They proved most productive for scholars interested in reconstructing Jewish and early Christian history. To this period of three years belong two most important treasures of historical evidence couched in the two ancient languages Hebrew and Coptic. Of these one was found in the Qumran Valley near the Dead Sea and the other in Nag Hammadi, a village in Egypt. The Nag Hammadi documents were contained in a sealed jar. The writings, 52 in number, (consisting of 1,191 surviving pages) deal with the beliefs of early Christians. They are all written in the Coptic language. It is the litrature of Gnostics the "Hebrew Christians" — the more pious part of the Christian Community. When the Roman Church set about destroying this literature, early Christians collected it and buried it underground in a graveyard. This literature contains the Gospel of St. Thomas. This Gospel contains the earliest version of 114 sayings of Jesus Christ, many of which the present day reader does not find in the modern Gospels. The most interesting point is that this literature contains dialogues which Jesus Christ held after the event of the Cross. This treasure includes besides the Gospel of St. Thomas, the Gospel of Philip, the Gospel of Truth and the Epistle of James. This discovery points to the changes which took place in early Christian beliefs. It also points to what happened to Jesus after the crucifixion. It also contains the parables and teachings of Jesus. These Gospels make clear that the death of Jesus on the Cross is a myth. Jesus lived in Palestine

(1) Ode — 11. John and Qumran.

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for 550 days after the Crucifixion, and he lived in the company of some of his followers and kept himself busy in teaching and training them. This proves that Jesus was alive after the incident of Crucifixion.

I give some excerpts from Nag Hammadi Gospels. The Gospel of Philip says :

"Those who say that the Lord died first and then rose up are in error, for he rose up first and then died."

Quoting a passage from the unpublished document Bertil Gartner writes :

"In one of the many documents from the Nag-Hammadi Library, the as yet unpublished Apocryphon of James, we read that the risen Lord walked with his disciples for 550 days after his resurrection, and that it is Peter and James who are there entrusted with the secret knowledge."[1]

The same author quotes another passage from the "Apocryphon of James.

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"Jesus said : Leave James and Peter to me, that I may fill them with fullness. And when we had called them both, he drew them aside at the same time commanding the others to attend to their tasks."[2]

In the Gospel of Thomas (published in 1959) we read :

"The disciples said to Jesus : We know that you are going to leave us. Who shall (then) be chief over us ? Jesus said to them : wherever you have come, you shall go to James, the righteous one"[3]

Again we read in the Gospel of Thomas :

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(1) R. M. Wilson, The Gospel of Philip (1962) p. 85
Bertil Gartner : The Theology of the Gospel of Thames ; pp. 102—103.
(2) Ibid. p. 120—121.
(3) Bertil Gartner : The Theology of the Gospel of Thomas. p. 56—57.

"(But) the days shall come when you shall seek me and you shall not find me." (Logian 38)[1]

It is clear from the above quoted passages that Jesus Christ escaped death on the Cross. He lived with his disciples for nearly a year and a half, he 'filled' Peter and James with 'fullness' because they had to look after his sheep in his absence. At last he left his disciples for good, nominating James as their Head.

There is also another find, a parchment spread over 30 pages This was found on the border between Egypt and Sudan. In this we read that Jesus Christ remained alive after the Crucifixion and could be seen in the flesh assuring his followers that he was alive and among them. (Kurt Berna, Christ Did not Perish on the Cross).

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(vii) In 1947 were found the Dead Sea Scrolls in the Valley of Qumran, in the caves of the neighbourhood. Many Hebrew writings up to the first Century A.D. came to light. At this time Jews were divided into three sects, the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Essenes. The Qumran find belongs to the Essenes. It was among the Essenes that St. John the Baptist and Jesus grew up. The Qumran Scrolls speak repeatedly of a 'Teacher of Righteousness' the same one who is mentioned in the Book of Damascus. Hebrew Hymns attributed to this Teacher have also been found with the theme:

"The Jews wanted to kill me and condemn me to a place, worst among the worst. But God had other designs. I was to be saved from this fate and raised up to Him."

(viii) In 1873 an ancient document (Essenian Epistle) was found in a monastry at Alexandria. This find, composed in Latin, passed into the hands of the Freemason Society. Freemasons had a strict tradition which puts a seal of secrecy

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(1) Ibid. p. 115

on all ancient documents. They refuse to reveal anything about these documents. Their followers and affiliates also take a grim oath of secrecy. However a German translation of the said document had already been made when the epistle was carried off by the Freemasons. From the German version an English translation was made which appeared in three successive editions. The title of 1975 edition being "An Eye Witness account—Jesus did not Die on the Cross". In 1975 the Freemason society was compelled to declare that they had in their possession the German translation of the epistle. They also reproduced a number of copies of it for limited circulation. Only two hundred copies were produced of which copy No. 68 happens to be with the present speaker. It contains a preface written by the Grand Master, BLANA MED PA, Grand Master Temple of the White Flame, Academy of Mystic Arts. New York.

There is no doubt that the Epistle is a most important document, a challenge and an invitation to all scholars.

(ix) The Church Fathers of the early Centuries had some ancient traditions which are of great relevance to our subject, some of which I quote below :-

In the 2nd Century, The Valentinian School of thought believed that:

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(a) Jesus remained with apostles 18 months after the Resurrection and gave fresh revelations which were presented in esoteric books. *An Introduction to the Study of the Gosples*, By B F. Westcott, pp. 460-461.

(b) A short ending to the Gospal of Mark Staes: And after that Jesus also Himself appeared from East, and up to West, He sent out by them the sacred and incorrupted preaching of the eternal salvation. Amen *(Canon and Text of the New Testament*, by C. R. Gregory, p. 511)

(c) In the 2nd Century, Bishop IRENAEUS declars that:

The Lord went down to the parts below the earth, preaching the Gospel of His coming also to them, (Ibid. p. 102)

(d) IRENAEUS further declares: He gave Himself a ransom for those who had been led into Captivity. *The Library of Christian Classics*, p. 385.

(e) EPIPHANIUS 395-403, describes a prominent traditian by Stating thus: Mary gone with St. John on his Journey into Asia. *The Book of Mary*. by Henri Daniel Rope, p. 135.

(f) Bishop IRENAEUS Categorically believed and declared:

(i) Therefore he passed through every stage of life: he was made an infant for infants, sanctifying infancy: a child among children, sanctifying those of this age, an example also to them of filial affection, righteousness and obedience; a young man among younger men, an example to them and sanctifying them to the Lord. So also amongst the older men; that he might be a perfect master for all, not solely in regard to the revelation of the truth, but also in respect of each stage of life. And then he came even unto death. Adv. Haer II XXII. 4. *Documents of the ChristianChurch of Bettenson*. p. 30

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(ii) According to the early history of Church the tales current in the days of Papias, the Lord lived to a great age. Early History of *Christian Church* by *Duchesne*, p. 105.

(iii) That Jesus must have passed through and been subjected to all the conditions of a complete human life from birth to old age and death. *History of Dogma*, by Dr. Adolf Harnack pp. 277-278.

(g) Mathew telling of his visit to the Land of Promise where the Lost Tribes dwell: (Oriental Acts of Apostles). *The Apocryphal New Testament*, by M. R. James, p. 471.

(h) Panteanus, writing in the mid-2nd Century, asserts that he found in India a Gospel in a Hebrew Script. *The Crucible of Christianity*, p. 277.

(i) After rising from the dead, Jesus had spent eleven years with His disciples, instructing them. (Pistis Sophia) FRAGEMENT OF A FAITH FORGOTTEN, by G.R.S. Mead (U.S.A. 1960) p. 459.

(j) According to the testimony of St. Jerome : The Son of God was with Thomas in all the places of India.....and with all the preachers of the Gospel, wheresoever they came. *The Kingdom of Christ*, by Peter Bamm (London 1959) p. 223.

The foregoing statements of the fathers of the Christian Church contain the real story of the hidden life of Jesus. But when interpreted, they assume a distorted shape. For instance, the fact that Jesus lived long and died old was transformed into the ingenious story that Jesus was crucified not when he was 33 but at the age of forty to fifty. His worldwide travels were constructed as his journeys into the bowels of the earth where he had decided to go ostensibly to save the souls of the Patriarchs of Israel. That St. Thomas accompanied Jesus during his sojourn in India was conveniently explained away by saying that it was nothing new, for Jesus always accompanied the preachers of the Gospels on their journeys. In fact, all historical evidence bearing on the life of Jesus was used to suit and save the official doctrine of the Church with amazing impunity regardless of the ridiculous interpretations this effort occasioned.

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That the seal of secrecy was set on truth by the holy Church and facts were sacrificed to sustain fictions will be borne out by the following quotation which I reproduce from M. I. Finlay's book ASPECTS OF ANTIQUITY, referring to the great Biblical Scholar Goguel ; it says :

> "Goguel is right to stress the implications in this connection of the fact that the earliest Christian documents form a canonical collection : What was remembered of earliest days of Christianity passed through a kind of censorship so that there is only left for us what conformed to the doctrine of the Church when it had

become fixed in one single form. Much other material was in effect thrown in the waste paper basket and disappeared.' " (*Aspects of Antiquity* by M. I. Finley, London 1968) pp. 190—191.

This vandalism and suppression of truth extended to Egypt in the West and to India in the East. An excerpt from 'Early Spread of Christianity by A Mingana, Longmans Green and Company — 1926, reproduced below will bear this out :

"Before the Synod of Diamper of 1599, there were many Syriac MSS in India, which contained an extensive biblical, liturgical, and patristic literature. The Synod, however, declared that all books which were opposed in any way whatsoever to the doctrine of the Church of Rome were to be burnt without pity." (p. 67)

Nag Hammadi texts too reveal a tragic situation. Writing on this, the famous weekly 'Time' says in its issue of 9. 6. 1975 :

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"The Nag Hammadi texts were packed away 16 centuries ago, perhaps to protect them from book-burning Christian opponents."

It is indeed a miracle that inspite of this continued and organised destruction and distortion of history, there should still remain a fragment here and a fragment there, even long and authentic Scrolls and Documents which more than prove that truth will come out and that Jesus did not die on the Cross.

(x) The question now arises. Do we have any mention in any of the ancient Indian books of the coming of Jesus to India and his travels in this country ? If Jesus really travelled to India, somewhere in ancient Indian Books we should have hints of his travels. Eighty years is not a short span of time and yet it is said that the travells of Jesus in the North-west of India and Kashmir occupied him for 80 long years.

If few or no hints whatever are to be found in ancient Indian literature, we have an explanation. Indian writers and intellectuals entertained a deep prejudice against all foreigners.

Alexander the Great came to India according to all agreed accounts. Yet we have no mention of his coming in the ancient Indian books. Indian historians are agreed that before the advent of the Muslim Power in India, India possessed no systematic history.[1]

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There is a book named RAJ TARANGINI which is a history of Kashmir composed in Sanskirit verse by Kalhana. It was composed in the twelfth century. In the entire Sanskrit literature this is the one and only book which could be called a book of history. This book not only contains many legendary accounts handed down from ancient times, but also some historical material. Modern scholars have to work hard to reduce this source to a reliable historical narrative.

An interesting feature is that in Raj Tarangini of Kalhana we have a description of a man of God who wrought miracles similar to those of Jesus. His name is said to be Isana. He is credited with saving a Minister—Vazeer—from death on the cross and restoring him to life. This Minister subsequently became the ruler of Kashmir. His rule lasted for 47 years. According to Kalhana, the last Reformer in Kashmir, was this man of God Isana. In point of time he is said to belong to the first century A D. It seems very probable indeed that the life events and episodes attributed to Isana are the life events and episodes of the life of Isa, otherwise Jesus.

The ancient books of the Hindus are called Puranas. These are 18 in number. The 9th Purana is called *Bhavishya Maha Purana*. This Purana has been handed down from generation to generation among the Hindus. True, like other ancient books, it has undergone changes, additions, interpolations. The additions made after the fifth century A. D. contain accounts of the coming of Jesus to India. The descriptions are pretty clear. In the Purana, we are told that there were Israelites settled in India and there is clear mention also of a prophet sent unto Israel.

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1. Vincent Arthur Smith : *The Early History of India.*

Professor D. D. Kosambi, the well-known Sanskrit scholar translates :[1]

"Once, the Chief of the Sakas (Salivahana himself, their conqueror?) went to a height of the Himalayas. There, in the land of the Huns (i.e. the Kushans) he, the powerful king, saw an auspicious man, fair in colour and clad in white garments.

Who are you'?, he asked.

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The other replied : Know me to be the son of God, born from a virgin's womb, preacher of the religion of the foreigners (maleachss), steadfast in following the truth.

On hearing this the king asked: What are your religious principles?

The other replied: Great King, when truth had come to an end and all morals had been lost among the infidels, I, the Masiha, arose. The goddess of the savages (dasyu), namely Ihamasi (the goddess Masi) manifested herself in terrifying, disguise: and I, having reached her in the infidel fashion, attained the status of Masiha. O King, listen to that religion (of hers) which I imposed upon the infidel: Having cleansed the mind and purified the impure body, and having recourse to the prayer of the *naigama* (Holy Book), man must worship the pure Eternal. By justice, Truth, unity of mind and meditation, man must worship Isa (God) in the Sun's heaven (*Suryamandala*, which could also mean the sun's disk). That Lord, himself as immovable (from his course) as the Sun, always at last attracts the essence of all erring creatures. With this (message) O King, Masiha vanished; and the blissful image of Isa, the blissgiving, being ever in my heart, my name has been established as "Isa-Masiha.

Having heard these words, the king removed that infidel priest and established him in the pitiless land of the infidels.

Commenting on this D.D. Kosambi observes :-

The nucleus of the story is the legend that the 'infidel priest' called himself 'Isa-Masihas'—clearly 'Jesus the

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1. Gabriel.

Messiah'—on which an attempt at a Sanskrit etymology has been embroidered but the Godess Masi[1] is a fiction, unknown elsewhere. The word *naigama* cannot be taken as referring to Hindu Scriptures and perhaps means the Bible. King Salivahana is traditionally credited with having inaugurated the present Hindu era, which begins in A.D. 78; but here he is said to have defeated the Romans and the Chinese—successes which might be claimed for a Kushan ruler, but not for any king of India proper.

If St. Thomas, whose tomb is shown at Mylapore (Madras), also in Malabar and (perhaps) in Ceylon, made peregrinations to these regions, his teacher may well have travelled too; but to accept A.D. 78 as Salivahna's date would make Jesus over 80 years old at the supposed meeting." *Jesus in Rome, by Robert Graves and Joshoa Podro*—London 1957: pp. 76-77).

(xi) When India was under Buddhist supremacy every saint who came after Buddha was included in the Buddhist Pantheon. Jesus came to India in search of the lost sheep of Israel performing the function of the scriptural shepherd.[2] Therefore, he came to be called Asaf or Gatherer. The Buddhists confused this with Buddhisattva and changed 'Joshua Asaf' to 'Budasaf'. The common people began to call him Yuz Asaf. The Book of Yuz Asaf was compiled in the medieval period. This compilation was a pure Buddhist legend. At the end of the Book, however, we have mention of ancient Indian tradition whicn describe Yuz Asaf as prophet belonging to the ancient times, a prophet who came from somewhere outside India, travelled to places in India but eventually settled in Kashmir where he died and

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1. means the angel Gabriel.
2. Isaiah 40:11; Ezekiel 34:23-37 John: 10; 11-16

remains buried. Digitized by Khilafat Library Rabwah

To make all this clear, we quote from the conclusion of the Bombay Arabic edition of the 'Book of Balauhar and Budasaf' (Yuz Asaf) pp. 285-6, corresponding to pp 182-3 of Rosen's translation:

> And he reached Kashmir, and this was the most remote place in which he ministered, and there the end of his life overtook him. And he left the world, bequeathing his heritage to a certain disciple, Ababid by name, who served him and accompanied him; he was a man perfect in all his doings. And he exhorted him and said to him: I have discovered and cherished and adorned a shrine and set therein lamps for the departed; *I have gathered together the flock of the true faith which was scattered and to which I was sent.* And now there draws nigh my ascension from the world, and the separation of my soul from the body. Observe, therefore, the commandments given to you and do not diverge from the truth, but hold fast to it with gratitude. And let Ababid be the leader. Afterwards he commanded Ababid to smooth out a place for him, then he stretched out his legs and lay down; and he turned his head towards the north and his face to the east, and then he died." *The wisdom of Balahar*—A Christian Legend of the Buddha, by DAWID MARSHAL LANG M.A., Ph. D.: George Allen and Unwin Ltd. 1957 New York p. 37.

Historical sources found in Kashmir point to this tomb as the tomb of Yuz Asaf, a prophet. In one manuscript[1] this tomb is clearly described as the tomb of 'Isa Rooh-u-llah'. This probably was the background of Qudsi Mashadi, the Court Poet of Shahjahan, the Moghal Emperor when he said:

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1. Mohammad Yasin, M.A., L.L.B., Ph. D. *Mysteries of Kashmir (Srinagar* 1972 pp. 13-14).

"This is the part of earth peopled by Isa the Spirit of God. And why not? When the breeze of grace begins to blow, we inevitably recall the miracles of Jesus.

(xii) Evidence based on Ancient Inscriptions

Ancient inscriptions are another important source of history. In Kashmir we have a hill called *Takhti Suleman*. On it is situated a temple. On the steps of this temple we come across two inscriptions, apparently restored to their places in the time of the Mughals. The writing on the inscriptions is mutilated but manuscript sources of ancient history of Kashmir give them out as follows:

(When this temple was being built) Yuz Asaf proclaimed himself a prophet.

Yuz Asaf means Jesus the prophet of Israel.[1]

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These evidences we owe to the ancient literature and relics of India. They contain clear mention of the coming of Jesus to India and his travels in that country.

Frye in his monograph: The Heritage of Persia[2] mentions some 3rd century inscriptions which list up the various religious communities then flourishing in the vast Sassanian Empire, as Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, Nasra, Christians, Mktk and Zindik. Frye notes: It is difficult to determine what 'Kristiyan' and Nasra designate. (p. 286)

As the Sassanian Empire covered an area stretching to Syria in the west and to north-west India in the east, it appears that the Syrian Christians were designated as Kristiyans and those of the eastern provinces as the Nasra i.e. followers of Masih Nasri.

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1. Mohammad Yasin M.A., L.L.B., Ph. D. *Mysteries of Kashmir (Srinagar* 1972) pp. 13-14.
2. Richard N. Frye, The Heritage of Persia, London (1962) p. 286 note 31.

It is interesting to note that in the vicinity of Herat (Afghanistan), is to be found a small community whose members call themselves followers of Isa, son of Mary, of Nazara, the Kashmiri. This reference is contained in a recent book Among the Dervishes by O.M. Burk :

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> The followers of Isa, son of Maryam—Jesus the son of Mary—generally call themselves Moslems and inhabit a number of villages scattered throughout the Western area of Afghanistan whose centre is Herat. I had heard of them several times, but considered that they were probably the people who had been converted by European missionaries from Eastern Persia, or else that they were a relic of the time when Herat had been a flourishing bishopric of the Nestorian rite, before the Arabs conquered Persia in the seventh and eighth centuries.
>
> But, from their own accounts and what I could observe, they seem to come from some much older source.
>
> I found them through one of the deputies of the Mir of Gazarga, the descendant of Mohammad under whose protection they are. Gazarga is the shrine where Abdullah Ansar, a Sufi mystic and great local saint, is buried in a magnificent tomb formerly much visited by the emperors of India and other notables.
>
> There must be about a thousand of these Christians. Their chief is the Abba Yahiyya (Father John) who can recite the succession of teachers through nearly sixty generations to—Isa, son of Mary, of Nazara, the Kashmiri.
>
> According to these people, Jesus escaped from the cross, was hidden by friends, was helped to flee to India, where he had been before during his youth, and settled in Kashmir, where he is revered as an ancient teacher, Yuz Asaf. It is from this period of the supposed life of Jesus that these people claim to have got their message. AMONG THE DERVISHES, by *O. M. Burke*, London 1973 p. 12.

(xiii) A twentieth century traveller Nicholus Roerich has endorsed the thesis that Asian countries and peoples possess a strong tradition describing the travels of Jesus among them. (Heart of Asia pp. 22-23)

Similarly we have Lady Merrick's description of the evidences at Himis (Ladakh). She writes :

> In Leh is the legend of Christ who is called Isa, and the monastery at Himmis hold precise documents fifteen hundred years old which tell of the days that he (Jesus) passed in Leh where he was joyously received and where he preached.

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Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru in his well known book Glimpses of World history has recorded :

> All over Central Asia, in Kashmir and Ladakh and Tibet, and even farther north there is still a strong belief that Jesus or Isa travelled about there. There is nothing inherently impossible in his doing so. (p. 86)

The Famous American Authoress PEARL S. BUCK in her biography writes :

> My father always a scholar, had studied Bhuddhism for many years, among other religions of Asia, and he had written an interesting monograph on the similarities between Christianity and Bhuddism.[1]
>
> Thus I knew rather clearly the general ideas my father had about Bhuddhism, one of these being that likeness between that religion and Christianity was not accidental but historical since it is quite possible that Jesus may have visited the Himalayan Kingdom in Nepal when he was a young man, and during the unrecorded twelve years of his life. Such tradition

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(Ref : My several Worlds, A Personal Record by Pearl S. Buck. N.Y. 1954 pp. 66-67)

is widespread in Northern India and is even mentioned in Vishnu Purana, the ancient Hindu Scripture.

These quotations envisage that Jesus visited Himalayas in his early years before the crucifixion. It seems to me that this proposition contradicts the available legitimate evidence. There is no doubt that Jesus travelled to the Himalayas. The question is whether he was in the Himalayas before or after the crucifixion. The most credible and authentic evidence of Jesus' presence in the Himalayas is provided by the ancient Hindu scriptures the Puranas. In reply to an inquiry from the king Jesus replied that he was the Messiah that arose in a foreign land.

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When Jesus was questioned by the king according to the Puranas his replies left no doubt that he was referring to the events after his advent and crucifixion.

A question may arise in many minds who was this king and when did he meet Jesus. The title of the king mentioned in the Puranas is Salivahana and according to the Encyclopaedia Americana 1976 Edition under the heading "India—Post Asoka India" the traditional Salivahana came to power in the early 2nd century and his name was Gautami Putra Satakarni. Thus the position was that when the said meeting between Jesus and Salivahana took place in the Himalayas, Jesus would be approximately over 100 years old. This is further corroborated by the revelation to the Holy Prophet of Islam that his would life be half that of the age attained by Jesus.

CONCLUSION

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Putting together the evidence from different sources, we can more or less reconstruct the life of Jesus after crucifixion.

Jesus Christ received a new lease of life after deliverance from the cross. But in Canaan he had to move about incognito. He continued to meet his followers however. We have descriptions of these meetings in Corinthians First Epistle of Paul, Chapter XV, and in the Nag-Hammadi Gospels.

The Roman and Parthian empires were separated by the river Euphrates. On the other side of Euphrates in Perthia were settled Israelite tribes, for instance in Adiabne, Nasibis and the Edessa. When Jesus could no longer move about incognito in Canaan, he crossed the river Euphrates and reached Edessa and Nasibis. It was easy from here to travel over Iraq and visit the cities and townships of this part of Middle East and meet Israelite pockets where they could be found. Naturally he must have delivered his message and his teachings to them. We have a tradition attributed to the Holy Prophet of Islam (on whom be peace and blessings of God) according to which the Holy Prophet in a vision saw that Jesus Christ had been to the land of Hijaz, that he entered the valley of Mecca for pilgrimage to the Kaaba, and that he used his own words of Response (Talbih) for the occasion. (Akhbar-i -Mecca, 223 A. H. p. 39 : by Al-Azraqi). Jesus had been telling some of his followers that he was due to come back to them again. He exhorted them to stay in Jerusalem. He did return for a while but migrated again, this time for ever. His special mission in fact was to reach the nine and a half tribes of Israel who had become lost among the people of the east.

The lost sheep of Israel had to be traced. They had travelled from Babylon to Iran, Afghanistan, North-West India and to Kashmir and Kashghar. They had become dispersed and were now living in far flung places. Jesus entered Iran from Babylon. On the way he stopped in Herat and from

Herat he made his way into Afghanistan. He passed through the Khyber Pass and entered Gandhara Valley. He roamed over places around Taxila and over the Punjab, entered Kashmir and went as far as Ladakh, Tibet and Napal. There were Israelite pockets, spread over the north-west of India. Jesus reached all of them and did whatever he could to have them settled properly. Gondaphorus, the Parthian king and the king of the Sakas, honoured Jesus one after the other and made obeisance to him. The result of all this was that the political climate became congenial for Jesus and the Israelites. Plans were thought out for their settlement. This work of settlement was completed under the care and leadership of Jesus himself. The people of Israel began to prosper. They became more settled, and gathered from all directions in the valley of Kashmir, which had been chosen for them.

In short Jesus Christ spent 80 years of his life in the North-west of India. He lived travelled extensively about and to 125 years, twice the age of the Holy Prophet of Islam (on whom be peace and blessings of Allah).

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Before closing, it appears necessary to deal with an important question which runs like this :

The ministry of Jesus Christ in Palestine lasted only a few years with the result that Christianity made such swift progress that there are 800 million Christians in the world today. We can trace them up to their earlist days. Ever since the time of catacombs up to this day, hundreds of thousands of historical proofs show that Jesus Christ (peace be upon him) spent only two or three years in Palestine where he preached his message. The fruits of his brief ministry in Palestine are before us all. On the other hand, Jesus Christ left almost no trace of his work in the North-western part of India despite the fact that he spent more or less 80 years of his life there.

What is the explanation of this seeming contradiction ?

To answer this question, we have to keep in mind a phenomenon of the history of religions. In the first century,

Taxila and Kashmir were the greatest centres of Bhuddism, whereas today Bhuddism has vanished completely from these areas.

Another example can be quoted of Islam in Spain which was forced out of that country by violence. This leads to the conclusion that a dominating religion can be wiped out of certain regions as a result of compulsion or even by peaceful propaganda by another religion.

It is a historical fact that Persia was governed by the Sassanians in the third century. The Persian kingdom extended from the North-west of India up to the Euphrates.

The Bani Israel inhabited in great numbers both Persia and North-western India. There were followers of Jesus Christ known as Nasira. Inscriptions found recently in Persia bear testimony to this fact. These inscriptions, traced down to the third century, clearly mention that in the bounds of the Persian Kingdom the Number One Community was "yhwdy" the second largest religious community was of Bhuddism, the third was Hinduism, fourth was the Nasira and the fifth the Christian

(1. Korter 273-293 A.D)

As the dominant figure in the Zoroastrian Church—as stated in the Kabe-ye Zerdusht inscription of Kaiter, he claims credit for the suppression of Non zoroastrian religious communities in Iran "and Jews, Buddhist, Brahmans, Nagoreans, Christians"

(Encyclopaedia Britanica persia.)

Scholars are surprised at the separate mention of Nasira and Christian.

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It is clear from the New Testament that the followers of Jesus in Antioch, (Syria) were described as Christians. Thus the Christians of the inscriptions of persia are Syrian Christians.

The followers of Jesus in Persia and North-west India were described after Jesus of Nazareth as Nasira. The Syrian Christians were taken prisoners during the Sassanian reign and settled in Persia. Within the State Boundaries thus there were two sects of the followers of Jesus, the Nasira and the Christians.

The inscriptions further reveal that the Great Magi of the Zoroastrians religion in Persia destroyed the centres of the

other religions and gave supremacy to the Zoroastrian religion.

The Persian history supports the content of these inscriptions. The Persian Christians were persecuted at different intervals during a period of one hundred years. This resulted in the suppression of Christianity in the North-western part of India and Persia which was subsequently absorbed by other creeds. The newly-found inscriptions are the greatest proof of the presence of Nagoreans in this area. During the Persian persecutions, this community slipped to the background. When in the middle of the second century, a great Christian scholar came from Alexandria to the North-west of India, he found there Christians of the Hebrew race. They possessed a gospel in Hebrew language and characters. This evidence of the Church history and the Persian inscriptions clearly show that the sun of Christianity did rise in these regions but then it set and it was assimilated by other religions and became forgotten as an independent entity.

Finally, there is another aspect to this question. Jesus Christ found acceptance in the lands in which the lost tribes of Israel were settled, and it is a very significant historical fact that while only a few of the descendants of the Jews in Judea, who rejected him, accepted the Holy Prophet of Islam in whose advent the prophecy of Moses in Deut 18:18 was fulfilled, the descendants of the lost tribes of Israel in the lands of the diaspora all accepted the Holy Prophet of Islam and became Muslims.

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This was a striking fulfilment of the warning that Jesus had conveyed to the Jews of Judea that if they rejected him the kingdom of God would be taken from them and would be transferred to another people. The Jews of the diaspora who accepted him did not become subject to the penalty imposed upon the Jews of Judea who had rejected Jesus, and their descendants continued to enjoy the bounties of the Kingdom of God. Many of them became rulers in their own lands and all of them in due time were admitted to the spiritual bounties of the kingdom of God when they accepted the Prophet of Islam.[1]

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1. Deliverance from the cross by Muhammad Zafarullah Khan P. 104

The Deliverance of Jesus from the Cross
Quranic and Islamic Evidence

By Abdus Salam Madsen

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Preliminary Remarks

The full title of my address is: The natural death of Jesus Christ and his deliverance from the accursed death of crucifixion according to Quranic (Islamic) Evidence.

This title is so formulated and is justified, because

(1) The Christian Churches teach that Jesus was crucified and suffered an accursed death on the cross for the atonement of the sins of mankind—that he was resurrected on the third day and ascended bodily to Heaven, wherefrom he will descend to judge the living and the dead.

(2) Many so-called orthodox Muslims teach that Jesus was not put on the cross, but someone else—resembling him—was crucified in his place, whereas Jesus was raised to Heaven in his mortal body, and that he remains there alive to descend in the latter days with the same physical body to judge according to Islamic law—as understood by these so-called orthodox Muslims.

It is my purpose to show that these two versions of the life, mission and death of Jesus do not find any support in Quranic evidence.

The word evidence may mean two things: witness (shahada) and proof (burhan). So some people might be satisfied to answer the question raised by the title of my address with a summing up of the Quranic witness as to the natural death of Jesus and his deliverance from death on the cross, while others might insist on some additional proof to substantiate the scriptural evidence given.

Now if we turn to a study of the Quran we shall see

that this division between the two meanings of the term" evidence" is not relevant, because it is a striking characteristic of the Quranic revelation that it gives not only witness, but always and at the same time also furnishes proof. The Quran never makes an assertion and merely leave it at that. The Quran invariably gives proof in support of every assertion. A close study of any given passage will reveal that there is full evidence, i.e. both witness and proof together.

You may have noticed that I treat Quranic evidence and Islamic evidence as synonymous. Muslim scholars state that there are several sources of knowledge of what Islam is. First the Quran, then the practice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad and then the collected body of the sayings of the Prophet. Many add to these such sources as concensus and rational insight. Whatever the learned scholars of different schools have been inclined to say about the classification of these sources, I for my part, and those who think like me, underline the simple historical fact that the Quranic revelation that came to Muhammad over a period of 23 years from 610 to 632 A.D. and was committed to memory and writing simoltaneously, is in all respects a perfect and sufficient document from which we gain all necessary evidence about our faith. Whatever is reported from the Holy Prophet is by way of interpretation of this evidence. That is to say, what the Holy Prophet said has no independent status ; it is all through secondary, though it serves to elucidate many a point. Yet it can never add any essential knowledge to that which we possess in the Holy Quran. Reason can with all its inherent weakness help us to understand the Message, but just as interpretation is already incorporated in the Message, likewise are rational arguments - as I have already pointed out. There remains one single perfect source of Islamic evidence : the Holy Quran.

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The plan of my address

The outline of the material gathered by me from the

Quran will be presented in three sections : 1. The mortality of man. 2. The mortality and death of all Prophets. 3. The mortality and death of Jesus. In the last section I shall treat in some detail with the two texts that are especially relevant for the understanding of the deliverance of Jesus from death on the Cross.

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As I have said, I shall restrict myself primarily to the Quranic evidence, applying the principle that the Quran is the best interpreter of the Quran, i e. to discover the correct connotation of a phrase we must have recourse to other texts in which the phrase has been used. We may also have recourse to classical dictionaries, but only as a possibly helpful medium, without placing too great confidence in all the mass of material which is often confusingly offered us there. Finally we might incidentally consult commentaries, mainly for the sake of curiosity, as we know only too well that commentators were only too prone to accept any fantastic story they gathered from Jewish or Christian sources. The modern trend in Islamic exegesis reveals a growing realization of the credulity of earlier commentators in accepting what is known as Jewish tales. Strangely enough this criticism has not yet in any great measure been directed against the heretic Christian interpretation of the event of the crucifixion which is so obviously the source on which many commentators rely when they touch upon the simple account of this event found in the Quran.

All men are created mortal and are bound to die after a certain term

On this we shall let the Quran speak for itself in the following references :

> God said : Go forth (Adam and Eve) some of you being enemies of others. And for you there is an abode on earth and a provision for a time. God said : Therein you shall live, and thereinyou shall die, and therefrom you shall be brought forth (7 : 25-26). Have We (God) not made the earth vast enough to gather the living and

the dead? (77 : 26-27).

Say :

The angel of death that has been put in charge over you will cause you to die: then to your Lord you will be brought back. (32 : 12).

And We cause that which We will to stay in the wombs for an appointed time, then We bring you forth as babes, then We rear you that you may attain to your age of full strength. And there are some of you that are caused to die early, and there are others among you who reach extreme old age with the result that they know nothing after having had knowledge. (22 : 6, vide also 16 : 71). Every soul shall taste of death. (21 : 36)

Have they not seen how many generations have We destroyed before them, and that they never return to them. (36 : 32)

And behind the dead is a barrier until the day when they shall be raised again. (23 : 101).

A brief commentary on the foregoing verses may be helpful :

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The first two Quranic texts affirm that both life and death are bound to be confined to this earth, the third text states that God has created angels that are especially commanded to execute His decree of death which must come for every human being. The two succeeding references give a more detailed description of the creation of life, its development through differnt - higher and higher - stages and its natural end in decrepitude and death. The three last quotations affirm that death is inevitable, also in the sense that there is absolutely no return to life on this earth, and that the coming life will be a new creation of God-not belonging to our present system.

All prophets have died

We did not bestow on the Messengers bodies that ate no food, nor were they to live for ever. (21 : 9)

We granted not everlasting life to any human being before thee. If then thou shouldst die, shall they live on for ever ? (21 : 35)

Muhammad is only a Messenger. Verily all Messengers have passed away before him. (3 : 145)

The Messiah, son of Mary was only a Messenger. All Messengers have indeed passed away before him. His mother was a righteous woman. They both used to eat food. See, how We explain the signs for their benefit, and see, how they are turned away. (5 : 76)

With this last verse we are already partly tackling the next question which particularly deals with the death of Jesus. He is included - of course in the category of both humans and Prophets, and so the question could be regarded as answered, but as some people tend to make him something special and outside the normal categories, we have to deal with it.

(To be continued)

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